

LaGrange storm drain marking project planned

by Wanda Yoder

The LaGrange Town Council gave their approval for a storm drain marking project Monday.

Sue Schlemmer, LaGrange County Soil and Water Conservation District conservation educator at Par-Gil, presented the project to the council members.

"The goal of the Indiana Storm Drain Marking Project is to educate and promote voluntary action for pollution prevention and protection of Indiana's water quality,"

Schlemmer said.

She referred to a recent article, "Dumping of oil into town drains-illegal!" that appeared in the *LaGrange News* on Friday, Sept. 19. "Storm drains are commonly misused for the disposal of waste such as paint, motor oil, antifreeze and pesticides. This improper disposal can seriously damage our community's water quality. Also, each time it rains, storm water runoff carries street litter and other pollutants into storm drains.

This 'non-point source pollution' is a significant source of contamination of Indiana's water resources and costs the county and state thousands of dollars," Schlemmer said.

"Every year more oil is poured down storm drains in the U.S. than the entire amount released in the infamous Exxon Valdez spill!" She added.

Parkside Elementary teacher Joyce Weber was in attendance at Monday's meeting to pledge her support for the project. Weber's fifth graders will would like to embark in a community service learning project by marking storm drains in the Town of LaGrange, she said.

The project includes applying a 2½-inch diameter marker on the storm drains in the LaGrange community. The markers display the "Clean Water Indiana" logo and the written message "No Dumping, Protect Your Water."

Precautions will be taken as to safety of the youth involved in the project and the town police, state highway department, county road department and public water works will need to be contacted to outline a plan for implementing the project.

The Indiana Storm Drain Marking Project is being sponsored by Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) and Hoosier Riverwatch, education programs offered through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service.